216 *Of the* NATIVES *of*

[This chapter is a summary rather than an actual translation of the original Russian. For a complete translation see Kamchadal Source 2.1]

CHAP. XVII.[1]

163 ## *Of the* BIRTH *of their* CHILDREN.

IN general theſe people are not fruitful, for I could never learn that any one man had ten children by the ſame woman. Their women, as they ſay, have commonly very eaſy births: 844 *Steller* was preſent at the delivery of one of theſe women, who went out of the hut about her ordinary buſineſs, and in a quarter of an hour afterwards was carrying her child in her arms, without any change in her countenance. He likewiſe relates, that he ſaw another woman who was in labour three days, and to his great 843 ſurpriſe was at laſt happily delivered of a child, which came double, preſenting the hips firſt. The conjurers attributed the occaſion of this unnatural poſture to the father, who in the time that the child ought to have been born was employed in making ſledges, and bending the wood over his knee. Such ridiculous 844 cauſes do they aſſign for every uncommon effect. The women are delivered upon their knees, in preſence of as many people as are in the village, without diſtinction of age or ſex. They wipe the new-born child with tow, and tie the navel-ſtring with thread made of nettles, and then cut it with a knife of flint: they throw the placenta to the dogs. They put chewed epilobium upon the navel, and wrap the infant in tow inſtead of ſwaddling cloaths: then every one careſſes it, taking it in their arms, kiſſing it, and rejoicing with the parents. This is the only ceremony which they uſe. They can hardly be ſaid to have profeſſed midwives, and for the moſt part the mother or neareſt relation performs the office.

The

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

163 The women of this country have ſeldom
165 more than ten children, the common eſti-
844 mate is four or five, they bear none af-
ter the age of forty. They aſſiſt one an-
other in their deliveries, which are effected
with great facility: meanwhile there are
midwives in Kamtſchatka, but their num-
ber is very ſmall. The accidents which
prove fatal to ſo many mothers, are much
leſs frequent to theſe women, than inſtances
of child-birth in the open air, in roads, or
wherever their occupations call them. On

mountebanks. Similar in their impoſtures, their reign and their fall are ſimilar. Various reflections might be made on this ſubject. That a people equally ſimple and uninformed, like the Kamtſchadales, ſhould for a time have been the dupes of the impoſtures of their magicians, is not aſtoniſhing, and will admit of an excuſe: but that ſuch extreme ignorance and credulity ſhould be made ſenſible of their error, and bluſh at it, is a matter of ſurpriſe and congratulation; for even with the moſt enlightened nations of Europe, do not ſome kinds of chamans ſpring up every day, equally perfidious and deſtructive! They have all in the mean time their apoſtles, their proſelytes, and a prodigious number of martyrs.